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Dr. Humphrey has added here and there many valuable notes, and at the end has added six pages of useful "Tables for Reference." The literature of the subject is given with such completeness that it requires nineteen pages. A full index with from 1200 to 1500 references completes this most satisfactory book.

CHARLES E. BESSEY.

The Letters of Asa Gray.³—It is rarely the case that a life is more justly and clearly set forth in a biological writing than is the life of the eminent botanist Asa Gray, in those two volumes prepared by Mrs. Gray. With rare good taste and admirable tact she has woven from the brief autobiography and the letters scattered through fifty-six years the charming story of his life. We can all wish for a such hand to set forth our life-work, when we have passed away.

The quaintly written autobiography tells of his early life, and of his struggles to reach some position in which he might do the work Nature had fitted him to do. There were many disappointments; many plans were made only to be overthrown or abandoned. At last came the appointment to the chair of Natural History in the newly chartered University of Michigan, and the year's leave of absence and commission to purchase books for its library. How well he used that year in Europe is told in the enthusiastic letters he wrote home to Dr. and Mrs. Torrey and "the girls." Thenceforward his life-work was assured, and upon his return he took up with vigor the work on the Flora of North America with Dr. Torrey, a work which he left unfinished after forty-eight years of continuous work.

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of these books in a brief notice. These extracts from letters more than fifty years apart may be suggestive. To his mother he wrote from New York in February, 1835, "I wish very much to spend a few weeks Georgia early in the spring, but I see that I shall not be able to do so. My time is spent here very profitably, and I am advancing in knowledge as fast as I ought to wish, but I make no money, or scarcely enough to live upon. Just at present I am rather behind hand, but think that by next fall I shall with ordinary success be in better circumstances. It is unpleasant to be embarrassed in such matters, for I should like much to be independent, and this with my moderate wishes would require no very large sum, and I have no great desire to be rich."

³*Letters of Asa Gray.* Edited by Jane Loring Gray, in two volumes.. Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin and Company. The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1893, 12 mo., 838 pp.

Contrast the foregoing with the following written from Kew, April, 1887, to De Candolle.

"You will be a little surprised at the sudden transfer of Mrs. Gray and myself to England, but I wanted a vacation and one more bit of pleasant travel with Mrs. Gray while we are both alive and capable of enjoying it. Whether I shall look in upon you at Geneva is doubtful, but it may be even for a moment. We never expect to have repeated the pleasant work at Geneva of the spring of 1881. We expect to go to Paris in May, but subsequent movements are uncertain. Always dear De Candolle, affectionately yours."

These volumes will always be interesting to American botanists, especially to those who enjoyed Dr. Gray's personal acquaintance.

CHARLES E. BESSEY.

A Theory of Development and Heredity.⁴—This volume recently issued by the Macmillans with the above title will no doubt find a good many readers. It is a book that deserves perusal, in that it presents with clearness the main issues that are now agitating biologists, though the bias of the author is decidedly Lamarckian. In fact, it is probably the strongest popular contribution to the Lamarckian side of the controversy that has yet appeared. The author states that in the first place the work is an effort to extend the application of the law of the conservation of energy to the phenomena of living matter, and to resolve the premises given by the science of physics to their conclusion in the realm of biology. How far he has succeeded may be open to question, but his array of facts in support of his views is certainly very creditable. Many of these facts have been known for a good while to biologists, but the author of the volume has brought them into their proper collocation in respect to each other and has made out a very strong argument in support of his position. In the second place, to use his own words, "it is the extension to all living matter of certain fundamental properties of life which psychology has either proved or tacitly assumed to exist in the higher animals." He here refers to the effects of repetition and association operating through a coördinating nervous mechanism or system. His view of organic evolution, is that it is a mechanico-psychological process. In this respect his views are closely similar to those of Cope published long since in a collected form—Cope's view is that consciousness is to be regarded as an important factor in evolution, just how it operates is

⁴A Theory of Development and Heredity, by Henry B. Orr, Ph. D. Macmillan & Co., London & New York, 1893, crown 80, pp. ix and 255.